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June 1977

CONGRESSIONAL BRIEFING

THE MILITARY BALANCE ON THE KOREAN PENINSULA

I. Mr. Chairman, today I would like to discuss the military balance on the Korean Peninsula. In doing this, I will try to point out the strengths and weaknesses of both sides.

II. First let me treat the static military balance

CHART - 70 vs 77 the past 6 years the static balance has changed from
Encl #1 rough parity to substantial advantage for the North.

A. First in overall numbers of men under arms--

The regular armed forces of the North have grown 30 percent while the South's have stayed nearly constant. The South's still maintains a numerical advantage of about 180,000 troops, compared with 200,000 in 1970.

B. Next let us look at ground forces.

1. Maneuver Divisions 25:19 - within manpower limits.

2. More critical are the firepower items of tanks, APCs and artillery.

a. From a disadvantageous ratio of 0.9 to 1 in 1970, the North has moved to an advantage of 2.3 to 1 in numbers of tanks, while the increase in ROK anti-tank capabilities has not kept pace.

b. The North had a numerical advantage in field artillery and multiple rocket launchers in 1970 of 1.4 to 1. It has increased to 2 to 1.

C. Now - Air Forces.

(Graphic: A/C Inventories - changed to delete 1982)

Easel #2

1. Defense AA/SAM's have been a major area of NK expansion. These would impact on ROK capability for an attack on North, and to some extent on CAS for battle front.
2. Both air forces have improved their aircraft inventories. The North maintains a 2 to 1 numerical advantage. North Korean aircraft are largely older models suited primarily for an air defense role and with limited ordnance delivery capability. South Korean improvements have been in more capable multi-purpose F-4/F-5.

(Graphic: A/C Range and Bombload)
Easel #1

D. Finally - Navies.

1. Navies will have little to do with the outcome of a major conflict. NK's numerical naval strengths are small craft for coastal defense, amphibious raids, and infiltration plus 13 submarines. The latter could inflict damage to naval or merchant shipping damage in the first few

day of conflict, but are not a long term factor.

III. The increases in North Korea's military strength stem from programs initiated in the late 1960s and early 1970s when it acquired weapons from China and the USSR on a massive scale, but at the same time build a large domestic arms production capability.

~~MAP-MAJOR
PRODUCTION
PLANTS~~

- A. The North Koreans now manufacture most of their artillery, small arms and munitions for ground forces, and some of their tanks and APC's. They also build a fair percent of their new naval craft, including R-class attack submarines.
- B. North Korea, however, still relies on the Soviet Union and China for sophisticated weapons and equipment, such as aircraft, missiles, and electronics.

IV. Let me emphasize that these are static numbers and next look at what this could mean in a dynamic, combat situation.

- A. To begin with, I'll talk primarily in terms of a possible NK attack on the South. I'll talk about the advantages and disadvantages as I see them of these force postures I've outlined.

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C. Beyond this there are several factors which limit North Korea's capability.

1. The North might face supply constraints.

We estimate the North Koreans have sufficient stocks of munitions, petroleum and small arms to sustain their forces for possibly up to 30 days of heavy fighting, but, with heavy attrition, major equipment would probably need to be replaced much sooner. Thus, while they could launch a war without Soviet or Chinese concurrence they could not sustain a prolonged offensive.

2. North Korean commanders might encounter problems orchestrating a coordinated offensive.

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25X1

D. On the other side the South Koreans are well trained and highly motivated, and they would have some initial advantage fighting from prepared defenses.

1. As pointed out, NK air power defensive oriented. Ordnance carrying capacity limited. Yet in an all out initial one

or two time effort, could attempt knockout critical command and control, SAM and air field systems.

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25X1

2. South, on other hand, is moving well to harden its air fields, with helter in existence for all USAF and ROK fighter aircraft in existence already. ROK air defenses are inadequate also.

E. Finally, on air side; the North Koreans can mount only limited air operations during bad weather, and they apparently lack the sophisticated munitions needed to knock out hardened targets.

F. On naval side I won't treat dynamics other than to say that if NK subs entered fray, taking on a lot more than SK, since the shipping they would have to interdict would come from the US and lot of other countries.

CHART

V. Now let me look to the future--what will the balance be like when US forces have pulled out?

A. Here is where those forces are today.

B. Consist of:

1 Div 14,200 men in 3 brigades

ESTIMATE 3-5 MEN IN
EACH BRIGADE

We will get answers during the night

59
54 tanks
1440 → 205 APC's
1184 Artillery pieces 66 mortars
108 * ~~108~~ TOW's 2000000 Rockets
98 Howitzers.

All additive to numbers have show thus far--

In addition following USAF assets in SK:

328
AC-
61 F-4's D-38 E-3
294 Helicopters
18 A-10's

- C. Apparent with US presence there is a balance of deterrence today. Whether will continue after withdrawal will be dependent on what ROK does to replace their fighting capability. There are a number of ways they can approach this:
1. Better readiness of forces.
 2. Better preparation of defensive positions.
 3. Different mix of weapons, specifically concentrating on anti-armor and anti-artillery.
 4. Better warning.
 5. Pure replacement of US men and equipment.
- D. Other side equation also have to ask what will/can NK do? Can sustain pace of last 6 years of buildup?
1. One hand see no sign of intent to slacken.
- Some new munitions factories still expanding.

2. Other hand--economic problems do exist.

--\$1.4 B debt--default on service payments.

Drying up credit from West where new technology might be obtained.

--Also strained economic and political ties with USSR.

Withholding advances in quality of weaponry.

3. Hence some clear restraints on NK will and drive.

E. Also clear restraints on SK.

1. Economy doing well, but dependent on infusions of foreign capital to tune \$2B/year to continue growth and to service \$12 B debt.

2. Already plan increase Defense share of GNP from 6.1% to 6.9% which with projected growth of economy would double defense expenditures in next 5 years.

--Any sizeable increase in this could only at expense of economic growth--and interruption of that growth, particularly for purposes of defense, could weaken willingness of foreign investors.

VI. Summary

Balance exists.

Withdrawal US units would upset it substantially,
but not beyond reach SK to make up for that with
own and outside help, both in material and tactics.

No - what kind of balance?